Collegium

YEAR OF
MILESTONES

From the Mile High City to Melbourne, see where we've been (and where we're going)

THINK
OTHERWISE

Yes, the higher ed tech & budget crunch is survivable. What's on Pathify's product roadmap. Rethinking student success.

CONTENT

EDITOR'S LETTER

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Colleen McBride

Dear Pathify Community,

Over the past year, I've attended several Pathify events and conferences, and one question keeps popping up: "What's with the Hawaiian shirts?"

My go-to response involves something along the lines of, "It's different, right? Kinda fun!" which typically gets an enthusiastic nod and a reply like, "You definitely stand out. Now, how do I score one of those shirts?"

These interactions perfectly capture what it's like working with Pathify. If our palm tree-patterned shirts and bucket hats didn't give it away, we like to do things, well, differently. Whether it's how we show up at events, the slightly unorthodox swag we hand out (stuffed kangaroos, anyone?) or our approach to business, we keep things fun, creative and playful.

Along the way, we prioritize people and partners — with this edition highlighting the individuals and institutions who tackle higher ed challenges head-on, leading the charge toward innovation and change.

Across these pages, you'll find personal stories from visionary leaders who discuss overcoming "bummer media," streamlining technology and rethinking student success. You'll hear from several institutions who are transforming campus communication and student engagement. And on page 51, you'll read why Pathify teams up with institutions and organizations who believe in the power of challenging the status quo.

These narratives illustrate how embracing fresh perspectives leads to remarkable outcomes — proving the juice is worth the squeeze.

We hope this edition of Collegium inspires you to do the same. Dive in and uncover the incredible results coming from daring to think otherwise — and maybe we'll have an extra Hawaiian shirt with your name on it at our next event.

With curiosity and boldness,

Hannah Fitzsimons
Editor-in-chief

03

156
CUSTOMERS

5
COUNTRIES

WHERE WE'VE BEEN:
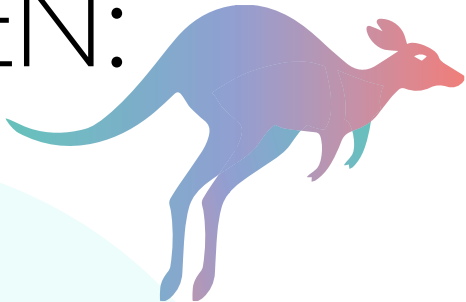
Total Events: **68**

In-Person Events: **44** (USA, AUS, CAN)

Virtual Events: **15**

Happy Hours: **9**

Lobster Sandals: **27**

Stuffed Kangaroos: **600**

Stuffed Armadillos: **300**

Stuffed Crocodiles: **50**

TOP 10 MOST FREQUENTLY SEARCHED TERMS
(INCLUDING COUNT)

CANVAS	BANNER
(54,275)	(41,952)
DEGREE	**HOUSING**
(41,348)	(35,442)
EMAIL	**TRANSCRIPT**
(34,630)	(31,880)
REGISTER	**SCHEDULE**
(27,108)	(26,674)
PAY	**ADD**
(26,674)	(24,202)

TOTAL UNIQUE ACTIVE USERS:
1,525,974

TOTAL NUMBER OF SEARCHES:
6,191,890

AVERAGE TOTAL VISITS PER MONTH:
688,277

NUMBER OF ANNOUNCEMENTS
7,878

CANADA

AUSTRALIA

A YEAR OF
MILESTONES
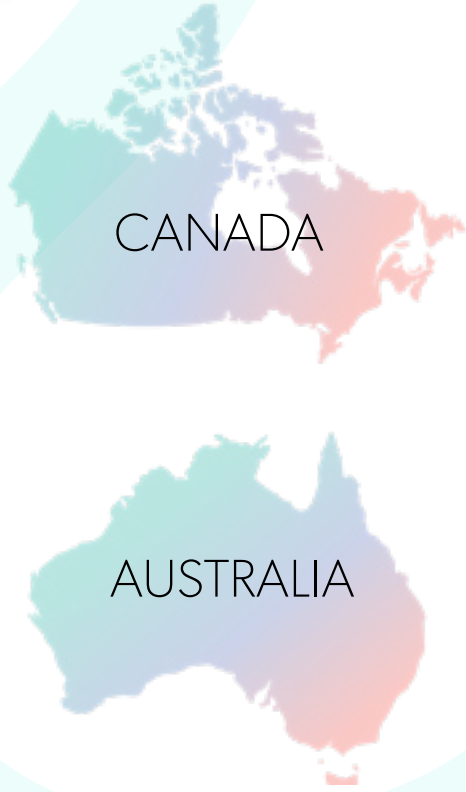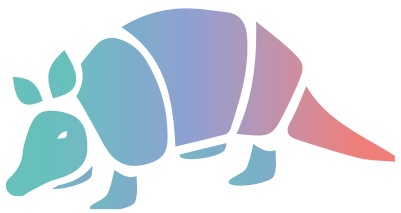
REBOOTING
CAMPUS LIFE

FROM MILE HIGH TO DOWN UNDER: PATHIFY'S GLOBAL CAMPUS MOVEMENT

Remember those days when finding the right link to register for classes felt like a treasure hunt with no map? Or maybe you were around before the digital age, navigating a physical campus to drop off the right piece of paper. We've been there — and we're the enthusiasts who asked, "What if student portals were actually... useful?"

This year, we've been on a mission — showing up at nearly 70 in-person and virtual events and spreading the word about Pathify like it's the hottest mixtape of 2024. From a student's first impression to their victory lap at graduation, we're all about making the student experience easier. Forget endless clicking, scrolling and bouncing between apps — we're talking about a modern engagement hub that even the most tech-averse would love.

Let's be clear — we're not just focused on building sleek dashboards and cool features (though we do those really well). We're a team of people who genuinely care about problem-solving to make students' lives easier.

Why?

Because we believe higher ed should focus on the overall student experience, without being hindered by outdated technology.

As we continue traversing across North America and Australia, meeting educators, high fiving administrators and fist-bumping innovators, we're rethinking how students interact with their campuses, one experience at a time. And if we can give away beef jerky bouquets, hot dog cookers and Lego sets along the way? Well, that's just the cherry on top of our very modern, very user-friendly sundae.

07
FACES &
PLACES
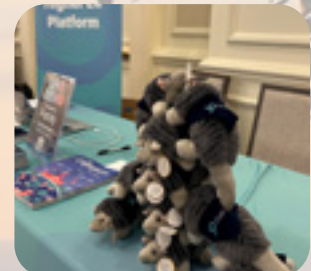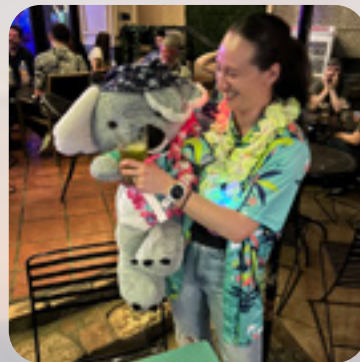
BRET
INGERMAN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bret Ingerman is the former Vice President for Information Technology at Tallahassee State College, where he led the institution's technology vision and strategy for over a decade. Previously, he held multiple, executive-level technology roles at Vassar College, Skidmore College, Lewis & Clark College and Syracuse University, managing tech infrastructures across both software and hardware. Originally from New York City, Bret holds an M.S. and B.S. in Psychology from Syracuse University. Now retired and embracing the stereotypical retiree lifestyle in Florida, he enjoys mentoring at-risk youth, playing his trumpet in local bands and serving as a BBQ judge.

10
NAVIGATING HIGHER ED'S
TECH & BUDGET CRUNCH

YES, IT IS SURVIVABLE

Working in higher education today feels like navigating a continuous obstacle course — with challenges, dilemmas and conundrums forcing us to quickly change and adapt. We regularly face simple challenges, like securing buy-in or obtaining additional funding for projects. Although we handle dilemmas better, they're more complex. The proverbial fork in the road challenges us with decisions such as choosing between product A and product B within a limited budget. Conundrums go beyond challenges and dilemmas — they represent situations most of us would rather avoid. Conundrums are so intricate and daunting, finding a solution seems impossible.

Budget constraints, exacerbated by declining enrollments, are the root of many IT issues — and they are worsening[1]. With private, non-profit institutions deriving nearly 20% of their revenue from tuition and fees (and public institutions not far behind at 16%[2]), declining enrollments shrink revenue sources, significantly impacting operating budgets and causing many institutions to close their doors altogether[3]. As institutions navigate a challenging future, they face increasing financial conundrums, where making tough choices — especially regarding technology investments — is crucial.

Increasing Infrastructure Costs

Most of higher ed's tech infrastructure remains fairly independent of enrollment, a sunk cost if you will.

Essential infrastructure, such as wired and wireless networks, and mission critical software like the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Learning Management System (LMS), incur significant base costs regardless of student headcount.

Inflation drives up software licensing costs and the cost of replacing aging hardware, making it more expensive to do the same things we did yesterday. Budget reductions or freezes, partly due to declining enrollments, further strain our finances. We need to allocate an increasing portion of our budget just to maintain core services. Yet we can't just maintain — institutions must continue investing in new technologies to meet needs and achieve goals.

The Balancing Act

Consider data security. Many institutions must invest in additional technologies to strengthen their infrastructure and secure their data — and these investments are no longer optional. New federal regulations require institutions to make these additional (and usually unfunded) investments.

As we struggle in keeping up with the increasing costs of essential services, we now face the additional dilemma of finding funds for new requirements. However, we've dealt with this before, and you, your leadership and your institution will make the necessary decisions to focus on what's essential while keeping expenses within budget. Yet, we face an even more difficult conundrum regarding funding.

[1] "Colleges Were Already Bracing for an 'Enrollment Cliff.' Now There Might Be a Second One."
https://www.chronicle.com/article/colleges-were-already-bracing-for-an-enrollment-cliff-now-there-might-be-a-second-one

[2] "Post Secondary Institution Revenues" National Center for Education Statistics (data updated as of August 2023
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cud/postsecondary-institution-revenue.

[3] "Why do Colleges Close" U.S. News and World Reports, February, 2024.
https://www.usnews.com/education/articles/why-do-colleges-close

Rethinking IT Investment Strategies

Technology does not stand still — new advancements regularly shape how faculty teach, students learn and administrators work. While it's often wise to observe emerging technologies from a distance before diving in, some innovations demand immediate attention. Once confined to labs, artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI) quickly became game changers, promising both transformative benefits and potential challenges.

And here we face the thorniest conundrum of all — how we manage rising costs for essential systems, invest in critical security technologies and explore cutting-edge advancements, while budgets stagnate or shrink. It may seem like an "either/or" choice between these competing priorities but let me be clear — it's not.

We must intentionally invest in systems that readily integrate with others, ensuring the entire tech stack exceeds the sum of its parts. We must also be creative by prioritizing investments in systems that benefit the entire institution, not just one area. By combining intentionality and creativity, we achieve a "both/and" approach, allowing us to fund both essential needs and desired outcomes.

New Perspectives & Approaches

At Tallahassee State College (TSC), Pathify helped us achieve our "both/and" reality. Pathify's Engagement Hub readily and easily integrated with a variety of our other software solutions, allowing students to access all essential information — emails, schedules, assignments and more — within a unified interface.

Pathify also allowed us to reduce the number of products within our technology portfolio, many of which met a single need for a specific area or offered overlapping features. Pathify's connective integrations and features enables institutions to replace a number of end user UX and engagement solutions — such as the student portal, campus mobile app, employee intranet, events and activities solutions, alumni affinity tools — even a GenAI chatbot.

With Pathify, consolidating departmental-specific systems or applications into one platform streamlined operations, eliminated redundancies, simplified technical support and freed up much needed budget.

Chipping Away at the Conundrum

While evolving technology might cause conundrums, it also offers solutions. As higher education institutions face mounting challenges and rising costs for maintaining essential systems, alongside the need for new security measures and innovations, they must rethink their technology investments. The situation demands a shift from "either/or" thinking to a more integrated, "both/and" framework, embracing both intentionality and creativity.

Solutions like Pathify seamlessly integrate with existing systems, providing new features for use across campus, while simplifying student interactions. By thoughtfully adopting intentional and creative solutions, we can confidently navigate this complex landscape and thrive, despite increased constraints and demands. Embracing this new approach transforms challenges into opportunities, dilemmas into strategic choices and conundrums into pathways for innovation.
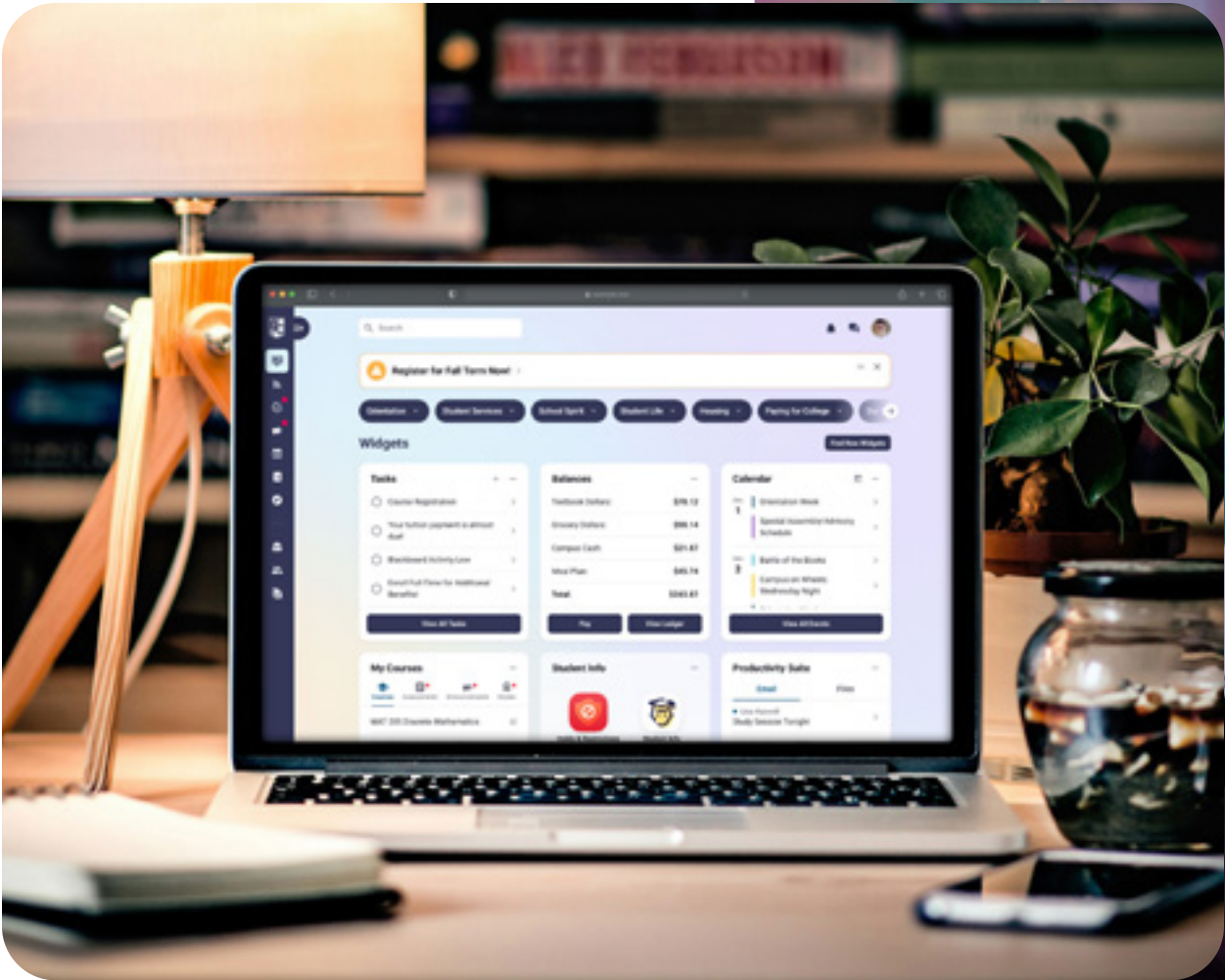
Photo Credit: Unsplash

> " Solutions like Pathify seamlessly integrate with existing systems, providing new features for use across campus, while simplifying student interactions.

— Bret Ingerman

13

SUCCESS IN STOCKTON:
A CTO'S JOURNEY WITH PATHIFY

How University of the Pacific reduced student registration holds by more than 80% with Pathify

If you visit the University of the Pacific's website, you'll see a tagline highlighting "big university choices with small college caring." As California's first chartered university, there's a major standard of excellence — the university offers nearly 100 areas of study across three campuses, all while seriously promoting individual student success. Faculty and administrators ensure a supportive and inviting environment, offering dedicated resources and assistance.

At Pacific, enhancing student success isn't just a goal — it's deeply embedded in the institution's mission of providing a superior and student-centered experience. As Pacific's Chief Technology Officer, Rob Henderson led the university's technology transition from Ellucian Luminis to Pathify, a shift revolutionizing how they approach student success, support and persistence.

Vision for a Digital Workspace

Faced with the impending Luminis sunset, Henderson and his team set out for a portal replacement that aligned with the vision of a comprehensive digital workspace. "We wanted more than just a portal," Henderson reflected. "We wanted people visiting the new system daily for news and events, completing tasks, finding clubs and organizations, viewing assignments. We also wanted a one-stop digital location for everyone at the university — students, faculty and staff."

After a reference call with fellow Pathify customer Antelope Valley College, Pathify's Engagement Hub became the top choice. "We went through a competitive bid process, but Pathify offered a well-rounded package of solutions," explained Henderson.

"We felt other products were designed for more transactional processing of SIS capabilities as opposed to the digital workspace we were searching for."

Removing Roadblocks

Before Pathify, Pacific campus communication relied on email — or students checking Luminis — causing missed notifications and confusion in finding information. "You could write a book on why students didn't know about certain action items," Henderson said.

After going live with the new Pathify "myPacific" app, improvement surfaced quickly. Henderson highlighted the registration process as a prime success. "Before Pathify, we saw over 900 students with registration holds each semester," he recalled. "Using Pathify tasks and announcements, we drove students toward getting those holds fixed on time. When registration started, we only had 140 students with holds — people here said 'We've never seen something like this before.'"

The nearly 85% decrease in registration holds majorly alleviated time spent sending emails and tracking students down while improving overall student success metrics. "Student retention between semesters is incredibly important," Henderson noted. "It's a huge win in educating students on why they have holds so they can quickly resolve them."

> "Using Pathify, Pacific reduced registration holds by over **80%**

Right Resources, Right Time

At Pacific, registration holds are just one common obstacle — a student may encounter up to nine different holds, ranging from financial aid to housing and meal plan holds — "so it's key for us to provide clear action items to address those barriers," said Henderson.

Alongside removing registration-related roadblocks, Pacific also experienced a reduction in late student payments. "Widgets and tasks and Pathify's Transact integration are significant contributors in getting student payments submitted on time," he added.

Pathify also provides customization and standardization opportunities — allowing flexibility and creativity, while ensuring certain resources always remain visible. "In "myPacific", there's a link to tutoring resources and it's permanently pinned to the menu bar. Students can't change it and we don't want them changing it," Henderson explained. "We keep key resources — like tutoring services — as accessible as possible."

Future Student Success Initiatives

Moving forward, Henderson envisions Pathify surfacing more complex information like displaying all holds or semester meal plan balances. "There are a number of students who leave money on the table — their meal plan dollars don't roll over. We want them seeing what their balances are in a widget or a notification so they aren't losing out on their dining dollars," he said.

With nearly an 85% reduction in student registration holds and decreases in late student payments, Pacific's investment in its digital campus has paid dividends — both on the administrative and student sides. "Pathify puts information in a location where students will read it," concluded Henderson. When students consume the right resources at the right time, it impacts retention, satisfaction and success. For University of the Pacific, removing roadblocks with Pathify ensures students are informed, aware and continually guided to success.

Rob Henderson
Chief Technology Officer
University of the Pacific

UNIVERSITY OF THE
PACIFIC

University of the Pacific is a comprehensive national university located in northern California, with campuses in Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco. Established in 1851, it is California's first and oldest university and is ranked by the Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education in the Top 100 nationally and Top 20 in the West. Pacific takes pride in providing a superior, student-centered learning experience integrating liberal arts and professional education and preparing individuals for lasting achievement and responsible leadership. With 10 schools and colleges and nearly 100 areas of study, Pacific educates a student body of more than 6,300 students. For more information, visit pacific.edu.

AN INDELIBLE MARK

GRADUATING SENIORS HONORED FOR DEVELOPING CUSTOM WIDGETS FOR USNH

Most seniors in their final semester remain focused on graduation, leaning into campus traditions, connecting with friends and enjoying the last few weeks of school. For Abhinav "Abe" Sharma and Rahul Chalumuri, Computer Science seniors at the University of New Hampshire (UNH), senior year proved anything but lightweight.

Alongside three peers — Zach MacKenzie, Patrick O'Neil and Kaleb Crowther — Sharma and Chalumuri dove deeply into software development work with Pathify, creating four custom widgets in "myUSNH" — the University System of New Hampshire's (USNH) student portal — serving over 27,000 students across five institutions. And, while many seniors were winding down, Sharma and Chalumuri presented their coding work, snagging an honorable mention award at the UNH Undergraduate Research Conference (URC).

Capstone Collaboration

As part of the University of New Hampshire's Computer Science major requirements, Sharma and Chalumuri enrolled in a Senior Project Capstone course, where they worked in teams to complete a project culminating at the URC. The capstone project idea came naturally — they wanted to work on something widely impactful, improving the "myUSNH" experience. "Over the last year, we saw 'myUSNH' as the place for all students, for whatever they needed around campus," said Chalumuri. "Developing these new widgets was bigger than just us," Sharma added matter of factly. "We wanted to deliver products for students to use well into the future."

Sharma and Chalumuri used their personal experiences to generate ideas for enhancing "myUSNH." From there

they scoped out four new widgets for the bus system, dining hall, athletic scores and student-run radio station. "I always Googled the dining hall menus, so I worked on developing the dining hall widget," Chalumuri said, with Sharma taking the lead on athletic scores. "We developed widgets we wanted and believed other students would want."
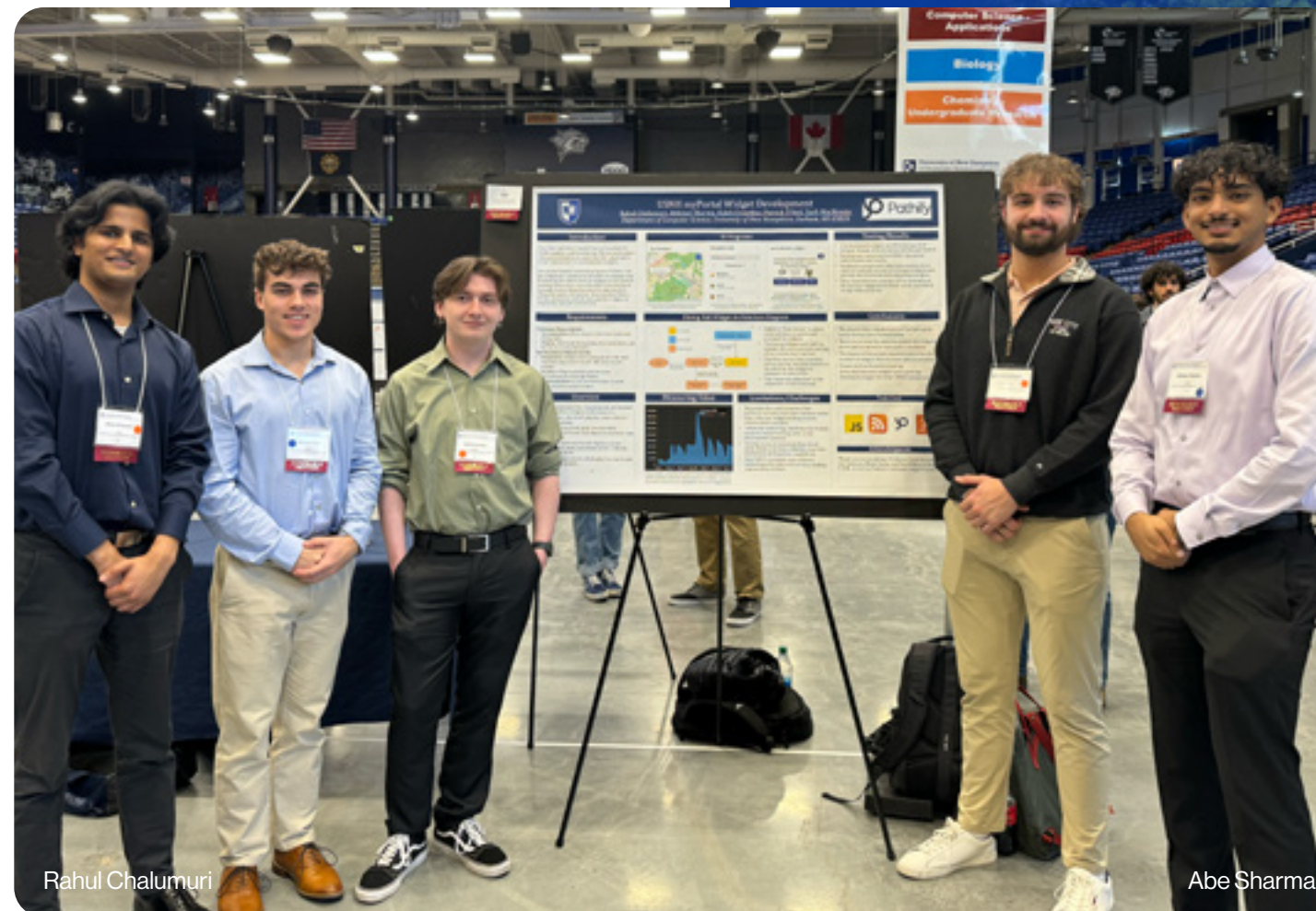
Rahul Chalumuri

Abe Sharma

Photo Credit: University of New Hampshire

"The 'myUSNH' portal represents the campus community, with a big focus on students," said David Blezard, USNH's Senior Director of Enterprise Operations and Business Systems, who initially connected Sharma and Chalumuri with the Pathify team. "We had little experience with Flow and doing development for Pathify. We turned the students loose — they dug into it, worked hard and achieved impressive results."

Navigating New Territory

Throughout the development process, Sharma, Chalumuri and team received strong support from the Pathify Engineering team. Mentored by Pathify's Julie Gumerman, Senior Sales Engineer, and Tim Stewart, Staff Engineer, the group delved into the intricacies of Pathify's Flow server. "Flow presented a whole new programming environment for us, especially on the back end," Sharma reflected. "Adjusting to it was challenging at first but we worked hard to understand as much as possible."

With regular learning sessions, Chalumuri and Sharma

asked plenty of questions, absorbing Pathify's philosophy. "Julie and Tim gave great Flow tutorials," said Sharma. "We tried to get as much knowledge as possible, especially since Tim and Julie have such great experience."

"Our Flow trainings were very productive — we walked through integration examples that connected to one of USNH's source systems and how to debug when things didn't work," Gumerman reflected. "We rarely work with student developers on Flow due to its complexity but Abe and Rahul's curiosity, willingness and enthusiasm made them successful."

"They both showed patience and we all had a lot of fun," Stewart added.

> "The 'myUSNH' portal represents the entire campus community, with a big focus on students.
> — David Blezard

Intrepid Innovators

UNH's Undergraduate Research Conference served as a perfect opportunity for Sharma, Chalumuri and peers to showcase their work. The conference stands as one of UNH's most prestigious academic events, featuring presentations from over 2,000 undergraduate students across all disciplines and majors. Reflecting on the experience, Sharma shared presenting to judges, faculty and friends felt both nerve-wracking and rewarding. "There were so many good projects — seeing our time and effort pay off felt great," he said. And the cherry on top? "Receiving honorable mention felt incredible," Sharma added, noting the team competed against nearly 80 presentations.

The award validated close to a year of hard work. "Now, the 'myUSNH' portal truly centralizes everything — students see balances for dining dollars, email, calendars, bus schedules and more," he said proudly. "It makes the user experience comfortable and easy."

Lessons Learned & Advice Shared

As they reflected on their experience, Sharma and Chalumuri offered advice to future developers embarking on similar projects. "Flow is a learning experience so work closely with the development team, stay patient and ask questions," Sharma advised. Chalumuri echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of creativity and teamwork. "Put yourself in the student's shoes — ask 'what would benefit them?'" he added.

As graduates, Sharma and Chalumuri acknowledge they won't fully experience the results of their work — but they're optimistic about the portal's future. "I hope other students get the chance to work on widgets because it helps the institution more than anything," Sharma said. "All we did was make the student experience better and more customizable." This mentality — fueled by curiosity and collaboration — highlights the transformative power of student-driven learning and initiatives, leaving an indelible mark on campus life.

About the University System of New Hampshire

The University System of New Hampshire (USNH) enrolls 27,000 students and consists of three public institutions: Keene State College, Plymouth State University and the University of New Hampshire. USNH strives to ensure the availability of high-quality, affordable, and accessible higher educational opportunities throughout New Hampshire and addresses critical state workforce needs. A 28-member Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the University System. Learn more at usnh.edu.

University of New Hampshire

SCOTT
MCGOWAN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Passionate about the power of mentorship and driving community development, Scott McGowan has spent the last six years as Point Loma Nazarene University's Director of Community Life. He oversees student leadership training, advises student government and manages the undergraduate student portal experience. Known for his exceptional project and people management skills, Scott holds a bachelor's degree in Social Science from Point Loma Nazarene University and a Master of Advanced Studies in International Public Policy from UC San Diego. He loves taking his family on sunny adventures all over America's Finest City, especially to America's Most Scenic Ballpark.

> " Pathify brings back the central ingredient most digital platforms were created for — being helpful tools that are used when needed, not turning the user into a product.
>
> - Scott McGowan

Photo Credit: Point Loma Nazarene University

ANTI-BUMMER MEDIA
LEVERAGING THE RIGHT DIGITAL TOOLS IN BUILDING HEALTHIER CAMPUS CULTURES

"TODAY, THE AVERAGE 18-YEAR-OLD IN THE UNITED STATES IS ON PACE TO SPEND 93% OF THEIR REMAINING FREE TIME LOOKING AT A SCREEN."

Dino Ambrosi delivers this bombshell stat in his prophetic TED Talk with solemn sadness, going on to argue digital media sucks the life out of life. In his presentation, he particularizes the claims of influential computer philosopher Jaron Lanier, who, as early as 2001, predicted "if we allow our self-congratulatory adoration of technology to distract us from our own contact with each other, then somehow the original agenda has been lost." Lanier coined the term "bummer media" (Behaviors of Users Modified and Made into Empires for Rent, in case you appreciate a good acronym) to encompass all unhealthy, dehumanizing digital media.

The Digital Age Dilemma

Social media, video streaming and gaming undoubtedly connect people, transmit knowledge and build cognitive skills. They also change our behavior at an astonishing pace (sound familiar? Maybe you've seen Netflix's "The Social Dilemma"). The young people we educate at institutions are particularly vulnerable to this — what moral psychologist Dr. Jonathan Haidt calls "The Great Rewiring."

While Haidt noticed this phenomenon back in 2018, his 2024 bestselling book, "The Anxious Generation," identifies the tripartite problem — an overly sheltered upbringing, smartphones in every hand and the virtualization of social interactions all significantly and negatively shape Gen Z's development. You've probably long suspected some of these conclusions — seeing them on a college campus is terrifying. In case you missed it, this IS our call to action.

Our Moral Imperative

As higher education professionals, our influence on the future hinges on our impact on young adults. If we succumb to the enormity of the challenges, fear of public pushback or our own media addictions, impersonal algorithms will restrict our ability to make a positive impact. However, suppose we courageously utilize digital information to promote human well-being. In that case, we steer our students toward a vibrant, authentic and connected future, rather than an isolated and uninspiring one.

As the Director of Community Life at Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), I encounter the challenging realities outlined in Haidt's work daily. A photo of an ex with a new partner or a shocking headline unsettles even the most resilient students. This constant exposure drives the sharp rise in demand for mental health services on our campuses. Our response cannot be limited to merely increasing staff at our counseling centers. We must confront upstream causes.

Guiding Responsible Engagement

Continuing to use "bummer media" platforms in conveying campus information raises serious ethical concerns — thankfully, many of my colleagues agree with this assessment. However, while Haidt suggests limiting adolescent exposure to such media, I believe colleges should take a different approach.

Higher education drives development into practice. Our students work and live in a digitally connected world. We must focus on guiding students — and ourselves — towards healthy, responsible use of digital tools. Encouraged by this possibility, our team chose our tool. We chose Pathify.

Combating Bummer Media

We searched for two years, examining and testing various digital solutions. We ultimately selected Pathify because we needed an intuitive, user-centric and adaptable campus portal. A year in, it's clear we made a good decision. As we continue confronting "bummer media," Pathify's comprehensive functionality enhances our ability to foster authentic student connection and development.

Pathify integrates our entire student experience while minimizing screen time. We promote it as the tool providing essential, relevant information for success IRL (in real life). More importantly, Pathify creates structured, healthy spaces for social connections based on specific interests or endeavors. These focused discussions complement and facilitate real-world activities.

Pathify serves as a powerful tool, yet its effectiveness hinges on our vision, partnership and proactive efforts. It requires leadership. At PLNU, we realized institutional leaders aren't the only ones concerned about this issue — students are, too. They are acutely aware of how "bummer media" is draining their generation. And they are ready to rally around a solution.

Restoring Purpose in Digital Tools

Our strategy centered around involving our 300+ student leaders at key moments. Their passion and courage to think differently and invite their peers to engage in more meaningful digital interactions played a crucial role in our successful launch. Our students are drawn to Pathify for its ability to provide clear, centralized information. They see and share the culture-changing vision.

Earlier, I cited the average youngster is on pace to spend 93% of their remaining lifelong free time looking at a screen. Given this trend, it's crucial to encourage screen time that self-limits, meets needs and directs users toward the IRL community. Driven by collaborative leadership, Pathify proves it's the right tool.

Associated Student Body President Colby Douglas represents a growing number of Gen Z students paving a new path at PLNU. He brilliantly commented, "Pathify brings back the central ingredient most digital platforms were created for — being helpful tools that are used when needed, not turning the user into a product."

With students like Colby and many other influential peers championing this vision on our campus, students are prepared to lead the charge. Embracing leadership, collaborating with conscientious students and leveraging Pathify as a second

iteration of media can improve the digital health of your campus community and our shared future.

> "More importantly, Pathify creates structured, healthy spaces for social connections based on specific interests or endeavors. These focused discussions complement and facilitate real-world activities.
>
> - Scott McGowan

Photo Credit: Point Loma Nazarene University

MIDDLEWARE & MODERN UX
ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY GOES ALL IN WITH PATHIFY

Angelo State University serves approximately 11,300 students across 100+ areas of study in the heart of West Texas. The university prioritizes community and innovation in approaching education and recently updated its technology stack — including replacing the legacy Ellucian Luminis student portal and consolidating its Ready Education mobile app.

Cold Call Catalyst

When a Pathify cold call challenged their reliance on the discontinued Luminis portal, Patrick Dierschke, Angelo State's Learning and Communication Services Coordinator, seized the opportunity to explore a more innovative solution.

If you're lucky enough to meet Dierschke, it's evident he cares deeply about creating a positive — and modern — student experience. "We used Luminis for nearly twenty years, mainly as a link farm," he reflected. "As we evaluated replacements, we found we were behind the curve in what we provided students. Just as we adjusted our on-campus technologies, we needed to upgrade our online presence."

Elevating Campus Connectivity

Angelo State University issued a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) in kicking off the portal evaluation process, with Dierschke quickly pointing out the importance of stakeholder engagement. "We made it clear that this wasn't just an IT project but a community project," he said, highlighting the importance of cross-campus collaboration and communication.

After several Pathify demos and careful evaluation of other vendors like Ellucian Experience, Transact and Unifyed, Angelo State determined Pathify was the best fit — Dierschke commended Pathify's modern UX/UI and integration capabilities with Banner and Blackboard.

The university also took the opportunity to evaluate vendors, alongside products, recognizing the critical importance of partnerships, especially those impacting campus culture. "As we moved forward with the evaluation process, Pathify stood out — there really wasn't any stone left unturned," he concluded. "We wouldn't have experienced success without such a cohesive partnership."

Looking Ahead

"Pathify actively engages with their customers' needs," said Dierschke, adding the improvements didn't stop when Angelo State successfully deployed "RamPort," its Pathify instance, in summer 2024. The university continues expanding its portal instance — including an unauthenticated Prospects module for prospective students. "Pathify has empowered us to create a portal that truly resonates with our students and the entire campus community. We are excited about what the future holds."
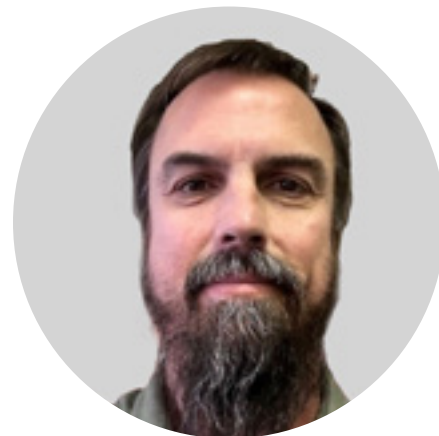
Patrick Dierschke
Learning and Communication Services Coordinator
Angelo State University

Photo Credit: Angelo State University

About Angelo State University

Student Headcount: 11,250

Faculty & Staff: 1,625

Institution Type: Public University

Location: San Angelo, Texas

Academic Programs: 49 undergraduate degrees, 28 master's degrees and 4 doctoral degrees

Tech Stack:

  SIS: Ellucian Banner (on prem)
  LMS: Blackboard
  Productivity: Google
  Technology Consolidated into Pathify: Ellucian Luminis portal, Ready Education mobile app

Angelo State University is a vibrant learning community located in the heart of West Texas. Consistently ranked among the nation's "Best Colleges" by The Princeton Review, ASU emphasizes community and innovation in its educational approach. Now affiliated with the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University educates approximately 11,300 students across 100+ areas of study. Learn more at angelo.edu.

27

CRACKING THE CODE
THE NEW STUDENT SUCCESS FORMULA

With over 15 years of experience in higher education administration, research and academics — and now serving as Pathify's Head of Solutions — Dr. Christine Deacons epitomizes dedication to student and institutional success.

When exploring the intersection of student support and technology, I knew Christine would provide perspectives as thought-provoking as they are practical. Drawing on her extensive research and work at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), we sat down and unpacked the power of predicting student outcomes, the value of embracing technology and the impact of an engaged community on college campuses.

Hannah Fitzsimons (HF): You've seen first-hand the challenges around student equity and persistence. How do these experiences shape your approach to student success?

Christine Deacons (CD): Absolutely. At Eastern Michigan, I led a research group focused on exploring what I call the "business of being a student." We wanted to understand the experiences and barriers facing vulnerable student populations.

It's like watching ducks on a pond — on the surface, they appear calm and composed but underneath, they're paddling furiously to stay afloat. I saw this in many students — they appear fine, but in reality, they're overwhelmed and terrified of sinking.

Research shows 40% of full-time students don't graduate, with most dropouts occurring in the first year. Feelings of self-doubt and ineffective institutional communication significantly contribute to this issue. To support these students, we knew we must quickly and accurately identify those at-risk before they reach the point of no return.

HF: What a clever analogy. How do institutions proactively identify those at-risk students?

CD: Institutions must invest in better communication tools, early alert systems and creating a more community-oriented environment where students feel seen and supported. It's about catching students before they start sinking.

HF: You've done research on student engagement and success. What insights and findings can you share from your work?

CD: I worked with Columbia University's Dr. Sandra Matz where we analyzed over 50,000 students and their interactions within community spaces, across four college campuses.

We focused on predictive performance, or forecasting behaviors before they happen. It's challenging to track

student social interactions and engagement — traditional systems like the Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS) offer demographic and academic data but often fall short in capturing crucial, real-time interactions happening on campus.

In our research, we monitored campus digital communities when tracking engagement — everything from comments posted, messages sent, notifications clicked.

HF: What an interesting shift — from relying on the SIS and existing data systems to leveraging another system to tell a more complete student engagement story.

CD: Exactly. We discovered certain centrality measures — such as the number of digital interactions, connections or how a student helps to bridge the gap between other students — strongly predicted both summer melt and persistence, boosting retention rates by up to 15%. Combining institutional and behavioral data allowed us to predict student retention with greater accuracy.

HF: When we think about measuring student success, we tend to focus on standard or administrative metrics, right? Variables such as a student's GPA, the number of credits they're taking, whether they attended class, or if they completed an assignment. However, those metrics alone don't necessarily predict success.

CD: That's right. The challenge with those institutional measures is they're often captured too late. By evaluating both institutional and behavioral data, we gain a fuller picture and a stronger, more accurate prediction of whether they will stay on track or drop out.

HF: How did your research impact your experience at Eastern Michigan?

CD: We relied heavily on technology at EMU by implementing a mobile student app that consolidated essential systems into one interface and provided students with a safe space to connect with one another and build a digital network of support.

HF: Hmm, that sounds familiar!

CD: Doesn't it?! I wish we had Pathify back then — it would have been truly life-changing. The web/mobile parity would have elevated our experience far beyond what our standalone app offered.

Either way, using an app made campus navigation easier and built a supportive community — critical in nurturing success. We onboarded students into the mobile app as soon as they enrolled in classes which alleviated anxieties and fostered excitement, leading to higher retention and reduced melt, especially among at-risk student groups.

It also provided the additional, behavioral support before a student even realizes they need it. To return to the duck analogy, it lessens those panicky feelings when we provide the right information and resources, early and often.

HF: Your mission of "cracking the code" for student success anchors your background. How does it impact your role at Pathify?

CD: For me, it's always been about more than simply understanding why students persist or drop out — it's about finding effective and scalable solutions and strategies to help more students succeed.

This mindset fuels everything we do on the Solutions team at Pathify. We want customers leveraging Pathify's platform to create environments where students feel connected and empowered to succeed. We're turning this into reality by building and enabling supportive environments, just as my research at Eastern Michigan emphasized.

HF: It sounds like higher ed leaders have a lot to consider — from both technology and student experience perspectives.

CD: The reality is, higher education faces more scrutiny and pressure than ever before.

Leaders need to move beyond the "we've always done it this way" mindset and instead, embrace new strategies and ways of thinking if they want to see positive changes. We must also use proper technology to engage students in ways that resonate — and are proven to work.

Institutions unwilling to think boldly and shift their approaches will inevitably fall behind. However, the institutions who embrace new ideas, technologies and remain open to change are the ones rising to the top — creating meaningful, lasting success on their campuses.

> "**Leaders need to move beyond the "we've always done it this way" mindset and instead, embrace new strategies and ways of thinking if they want to see positive changes.**
>
> **- Christine Deacons**

Christine Deacons
Head of Solutions
Pathify

Dr. Christine Deacons brings over 20 years of expertise in higher education administration, research and academic leadership. Before joining Pathify, she served as Vice President of Student Success and Head of Research at Ready Education and holds a PhD in Educational Leadership from Eastern Michigan University. When she's not driving innovation in student success, Christine enjoys exploring Michigan and indulging in outdoor activities with her family.

31

CREATING CAMPUS CONNECTIVITY
IOWA LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE SELECTS PATHIFY

In the heart of northwestern Iowa, where the landscape echoes the quiet determination of its community, Beth Elman, the Executive Director of Marketing at Iowa Lakes Community College sought a solution in guiding the college toward modern connectedness. With ambition, a strategic vision and long-awaited grant funding, the college partnered with Pathify — revolutionizing student engagement and communication.

The Search Begins

Recognizing funding constraints as a challenge, Elman applied for — and received — a Lumina Foundation grant, aligning Pathify with Iowa Lakes' vision of eliminating barriers to enrollment and fostering increased connectedness with the college.

"Given our rural location, we knew the importance of providing mobile access for students to connect with Iowa Lakes," she said. "With mobile, we knew students would connect with us, other students and faculty."

Elman emphasized the importance of connecting systems seamlessly but providing a user-friendly, social media-inspired user experience. Compelling proof from neighboring peer institutions — such as Indian Hills Community College and North Iowa Area Community College — further strengthened Iowa Lakes' confidence in Pathify.

Building Buy-in

Elman collaborated with various departments and stakeholders within the college, gaining support from the Dean of Students and other leaders in building a collective sense of ownership.

"The only way I saw Pathify as successful was with cross-departmental input and support – understanding how the portal will be used and how it will benefit them. The more people with ownership, the more they'll want it to succeed," Elman observed.

From a tech perspective, the college desired full compatibility with Ellucian Colleague, ensuring seamless integration, facilitating enhanced efficiency and reducing duplicate work. "Compatibility and connectivity with our existing systems was crucial," she added. "Above all, we were cognizant of making sure Pathify's not just another system, but a tool everyone on campus will use."

Excitement for the Future

Elman's vision for Pathify extends beyond mere system connectivity. "Connecting systems will always be important," she noted. "We also see Pathify improving our student experience, offering more effective communication."

From streamlining access to Canvas to consolidating resources and notifications within the platform, Elman remains excited and optimistic about Pathify's ability to modernize the student experience. "It's invaluable to connect students with other, like-minded students. We see Pathify completely transforming how we communicate," she said.

Iowa Lakes fully launched its Pathify portal in summer 2024.

Beth Elman
Executive Director of Marketing
Iowa Lakes Community College

About Iowa Lakes Community College

Student Headcount: 1,960

Institution Type: Public community college

Location: Estherville, Iowa (with campuses in Algona, Emmetsburg, Spencer and Spirit Lake, Iowa)

Academic Programs: 49 undergraduate degrees, 28 master's degrees and 4 doctoral degrees

Tech Stack:

SIS: Ellucian Colleague (on prem)
LMS: Canvas
Productivity: Microsoft

Renowned as one of the top twenty community colleges in the nation, Iowa Lakes Community College provides graduates with a solid foundation for furthering their education through four-year bachelor's degree programs or launching into high-demand careers. Iowa Lakes focuses on lifelong learning opportunities by offering continuing education, vocational and re-licensure courses and classes designed for personal development and career advancement. For more information, visit iowalakes.edu.

Photo Credit: Iowa Lakes Community College

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST
PATHIFY POWERS UP PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Originally established in 1958 to serve the eastern Washington D.C. region, Prince George's Community College (PGCC) steadfastly embodies its mission in transforming lives through education, service and partnerships, always prioritizing student success and equity. And when they received feedback about their legacy student portal, they knew it was time for change.

A New Era of Engagement

"At the time, our portal technology wasn't fully serving our students," said Dr. Sherrie Johnson, Vice President of External Affairs, Communications and Advancement, remembering the portal as "outdated, cumbersome and difficult to navigate."

The College conducted student focus groups and identified a need for a modern, digital resource in delivering reliable and timely campus updates across both web and mobile devices. Using this feedback, PGCC diligently researched vendor options — along the way, consulting with several Pathify customers to grasp their use cases and experiences.

Student-Driven Success

Impressed with the depth and breadth of its functionality and glowing customer references, PGCC confidently selected Pathify as its new student portal. "We now have a tool that meets all our students' needs, whether they are registering for classes, paying tuition or engaging in campus life," Johnson explained.

As the college began building out its Pathify portal instance — "myPGCC" — the team tapped into student feedback again, involving them in the beta-testing phase before launch. "Students are really excited about what they've seen," said Johnson, acknowledging the paired web/mobile experience as a significant convenience for daily tasks. "We look forward to fully delivering the functionalities students have requested."

Pathify's training and implementation assistance ensured a smooth and supportive deployment. "We are very appreciative of the support Pathify provided in making sure our faculty and staff understand the platform to its fullest potential," Johnson reflected.
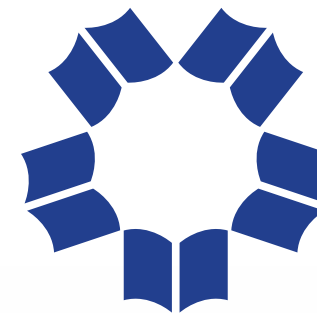
Future Vision

The institution remains particularly excited about Pathify Communities, allowing students to communicate and organize across groups and campus events. Mobile accessibility adds yet another layer of convenience, making it easier for students to stay connected and engaged. "Pathify energizes and enhances our student engagement and campus life," said Johnson, adding that prioritizing student needs and experiences helps in providing top-notch experiences at Prince George's Community College.

With Pathify, PGCC offers a dynamic, engaging digital environment that truly puts students first. As the college continues integrating and expanding its Pathify features, it remains committed to fostering a vibrant, authentic and connected campus life.

Prince George's Community launched its Pathify portal in summer 2024.

Dr. Sherrie Johnson
Vice President, External Affairs, Communications and Advancement
Prince George's Community College

About Prince George's Community College

Student Headcount: 25,416

Faculty & Staff: 2,464

Institution Type: Public college

Location: Largo, Maryland

Academic Programs: 58 associate degree programs, 40 certificate programs

Tech Stack:
SIS: Ellucian Colleague
LMS: Canvas
Productivity: Microsoft

Prince George's Community College is a comprehensive community college serving more than 40,000 credit and noncredit students each year. Founded in 1958 as the first integrated school in Prince George's County, the college prepares students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities, assists students in developing immediate workforce skills and readies students for the needs of employers. In addition to a main campus in Largo, Maryland, the college offers credit and noncredit instruction at four additional locations. Learn more at pgcc.edu.

Photo Credit: Prince George's Community College

35

COOK'S CORNER

By Loui Atchison

Prep Time: **35 minutes**

Cook Time: **25 minutes**

Total Time: **1 hour**

Servings: **24-32 protein-packed bites**

Green Chile Kangaroo Rolls

Ingredients:

1 lb kangaroo meat* (or ground beef/pork if unavailable)

1/2 cup roasted green chiles, diced

Note: don't be afraid to go spicy!

1 small onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup breadcrumbs

1 egg, beaten

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp dried thyme

1 tsp dried rosemary

½ tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

1 cup freshly shredded cheddar cheese

2 sheets puff pastry

1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)

*Did You Know?

Known for its lean, high-protein content and rich flavor, kangaroo meat is a staple in many Australian households. Its popularity stems from being sustainable and environmentally friendly, as kangaroos are free-range, never farmed and managed under strict quotas set by the government. In Australia, kangaroo is as common as beef or chicken in the U.S., often featured in various dishes from burgers and sausages to steaks, meatballs and casseroles. While it might seem exotic to some, kangaroo meat is a delicious and everyday part of Aussie cuisine!

If you're up for the adventure, you can order kangaroo meat online at Wild Fork Foods and Fossil Farms.

Assembly and Cooking:

Preheat the Oven: Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Prepare the Filling: In a large bowl, combine the meat, roasted green chiles, chopped onion, minced garlic, breadcrumbs, beaten egg, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, rosemary, cheddar cheese, salt and pepper. Mix until well combined.

Prepare the Pastry: Roll out one sheet of puff pastry and cut in half lengthwise. Repeat with the second sheet, creating four strips.

Assemble the Rolls: Divide the meat mixture into four equal portions. Shape each portion into a long cylinder, placing each in the center of each pastry strip. Roll the dough around the meat mixture, sealing the seam with egg wash.

Cut and Brush: Cut each roll into small pieces (about 2 inches long). Place the rolls on the prepared baking sheets and brush the tops with the remainder of the egg wash.

Bake the Rolls: Bake for 23-27 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown and the meat is cooked through.
Mix up our Sparkling Shiraz (page 37) while you wait! OR Take a whack at Brain Games on pages 55 and 56!

Serve and Enjoy: Allow the sausage rolls to cool slightly before serving. Enjoy warm with your favorite dipping sauce (we like mustard or barbeque sauce!)

Extra Credit: Post a picture of your sausage rolls on LinkedIn and tag us (@Pathify) for a chance to win a Pathify Hawaiian shirt!

Fancy a good tucker? Spice up your culinary repertoire with our Aussie-Inspired Green Chile Kangaroo Rolls! Just like Pathify leaps forward in higher ed, these rolls bounce onto your taste buds with bold flavors...and a touch of adventure. Combining zesty Colorado green chiles with hearty kangaroo packs a punch that'll leave you craving more — much like Pathify.

You see, we don't just follow the herd — we blaze new trails, and these recipes are no exception. They're a scrumptious metaphor for our commitment to pushing boundaries and embracing the unexpected. Think of each bite as a walkabout through the Outback, creating a fusion as thrilling and dynamic as our approach to building the best software in higher ed. For the ultra adventurous, pair your meal with Sparkling Shiraz, a festive and fizzy drink brimming with rich, ripe fruit flavors — a "grape" match for our savory meat rolls.

Whether you're trekking through the tech-stack billabong or hopping up to mix a cocktail, Pathify blends innovation and spice to keep things exciting...with these recipes as no exception. So strap in and get ready for a bonza ride that's far from ordinary!

There's more to this feast! With Australia's renowned old-vine Shiraz grapes delivering rich flavors like blackberry and plum, our Sparkling Shiraz spritzer delightfully complements your spicy, savory sausage bites. Get ready, set and fizz… and let the effervescent fun begin!

Total Time: **3 minutes**

Servings: **1 cocktail**

Sparkling Shiraz

Ingredients:

3 oz Australian Shiraz*

3 oz lemon-lime soda

Ice

Orange slice, for garnish

*Substitute a dark red fruit juice (preferably grape, pomegranate or cranberry) for a non-alcoholic alternative.

Assembly and Cooking:

1. Fill a wine glass with ice.

2. Pour in the Shiraz and lemon-lime soda.

3. Stir gently to combine.

4. Garnish with an orange slice.

Photo Credit: Unsplash

NEXT-LEVEL CAMPUS COMMUNICATIONS
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA'S PORTAL TRANSFORMATION

When Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) decided to overhaul its campus portal, the team knew they were in for a challenge. Brian Bowers, Manager of Web Development and Mobile Applications, led the effort in finding a modern, mobile portal platform to support XULA's student body.

Outdated Systems & Modern Demands

XULA's legacy system (an Ellucian portal built on SharePoint) failed in meeting the needs of their increasingly tech-savvy students and faculty, who demanded more interactive communication. "Our old portal was completely static," Bowers described. "Additionally, we used two different mobile applications, which raised concerns because of the lack of two-way communication."

Recognizing the modern student lives on their mobile devices and expects intuitive, interactive digital experiences, Bowers searched for a better solution that delivered web/mobile parity. "We needed to meet students where they are — online and on their mobile devices," he said.

Powering Up the Portal

The team evaluated upgrading their Ellucian portal in addition to considering solutions from Anthology and Jenzabar. But after the first Pathify demo — Bowers was sold. "It was leaps and bounds ahead of what we had," he recalled.

Along the way, the portal team engaged student groups (including student workers and Student Government Association members) early in the implementation process. "We wanted student feedback to help build the portal to fit their needs," shared Bowers. Thoughtful planning and collaboration with the Pathify team ensured a smooth transition. "Our Pathify launch plan was very laid out, very detailed. We followed a specific order for success."

The transition from SharePoint to Pathify wasn't just about refreshing the portal environment — it revolutionized how XULA's campus communicated and connected. "Pathify connects all our systems in one place, allowing students, faculty and staff to access them anytime they want," Bowers explained. Pulling systems like Banner, D2L, email, athletics and student events under Pathify's centralized platform created a true one-stop-shop for XULA's campus, eliminating multiple logins and bookmarks.

Future Developments

Bowers remains excited and optimistic for the future. "The Recipe Library makes integrating our systems easy and we look forward to activating as many widgets as possible to provide a stellar student experience," he said. By prioritizing the needs and preferences of the modern-day student, XULA created a functional, engaging and interactive portal instance, setting a new standard for campus communication.

Brian Bowers
Manager of Web Development and Mobile Applications
Xavier University of Louisiana

About Xavier University of Louisiana

Student Headcount: 3,181

Faculty & Staff: 460

Institution Type: Private

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

Academic Programs: 71 undergraduate programs, 11 graduate programs

Tech Stack:

    SIS: Ellucian Banner
    LMS: D2L
    Productivity: Microsoft
    Technology Consolidated into Pathify: Ellucian SharePoint portal, two mobile apps, document farm

Located in New Orleans, Louisiana, Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) is a private, historically Black institution with a rich legacy dating back to its establishment in 1925. With a full-time student body of around 3,200 students, it stands as the only Catholic HBCU in the United States. XULA is dedicated to excellence in education, preparing students for leadership and service in a diverse learning environment. The University recently transitioned from a Sharepoint student portal to Pathify, leverages D2L (Brightspace) for its learning management system and manages student information through an on-prem Ellucian Banner instance. Learn more at xula.edu.

Photo Credit: Xavier University of Louisiana

FROM EMAIL FATIGUE TO EMPOWERED ENGAGEMENT
ADVISING AT ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

Critical for student success, persistence and retention, academic advising shapes students' educational journey and influences institutional success. Leah Deranian, formerly a Career and Academic Advisor, and now an Instructional Technology Specialist, at St. Petersburg College (SPC), embraces this responsibility. Leveraging Pathify Communities, she facilitated an engaging, supportive and creative community for students navigating the intricacies of college.

From Inbox to Interaction

Deranian shouldered a caseload of around 1,600 students, many of whom were first-time-in-college (FTIC) students. Before Pathify, she relied on traditional communication methods — primarily phone calls and emails — to keep in touch. "Research shows students succeed when we give them small pieces of information that are timely and frequently delivered. Email couldn't execute on that," she explained, referencing the importance of timeliness when students register for courses or when new course sections open. "I wasn't seeing an ROI on my emails, students weren't reading them."

Upon launching Pathify in 2022, SPC created Groups for each campus branch, facilitating location-specific communication and engagement. Frustrated with email's limitations, Deranian advocated for a Pathify Group to promptly and creatively deliver advising information. "Students immediately interacted in campus-wide groups and I wanted them to have an extension of that experience with me," she said. "I'm already writing email content. Why not try putting that same content in Groups?"

Engaging the Modern Student

Deranian's copy-and-paste strategy quickly morphed into specific, creative messaging for her students, leveraging subject lines and eye-catching content as well as scheduled and real-time posts. "Students reacted really well to the Group," Deranian said. "Of course, we still send them occasional, general emails but the Group is where the big outreach efforts happen."

Using a PeopleSoft integration, students are automatically enrolled in her advising Group. Admin control features enable her to approve student posts before going live, ensuring content stays relevant and appropriate.

And she continued iterating even more. "I focused on the teachable moments," she explained, with double-posting one of the strategies. "I fielded so many questions that I started posting two responses. I acknowledged their question, like 'Okay, I see this, I'll get you an answer by tomorrow morning.' And then I'd respond with the answer, too. Students love that, they feel heard. Their question isn't sent into the ether, they're notified that someone's working on their question," she added.

Positive role modeling also emerged as an ancillary benefit, causing a 'snowball effect' of student engagement, Deranian observed. "One student will ask a question, and other students will comment 'I have this same question' or 'following!' There's value in knowing you're not the only one wondering about something — people have a lot of insecurity about that," she empathized.

She recalls a student posting in the Group asking for feedback on her My Learning Plan, an SPC tool used in guiding students through course planning and degree requirements. After answering the student's question in the comments, Deranian received multiple emails and appointment requests from other students asking her to review their My Learning Plans. She points out this engagement is completely student-driven. "These are students I've emailed and called numerous times. Students didn't reach out for help until they saw another student ask for it first. All I did was provide an online space where students can see what others are doing to be successful," she commented. "You can't get that experience through email."

Impact in Action

When Deranian reflects on success, two tangible outcomes stand out. Notably, she saw an 18% reduction in emails during peak registration, alleviating a significant administrative burden. "In Groups, students get the information they need a lot quicker — we can also respond more quickly — because it doesn't get buried in an email inbox," she explained.

Deranian acknowledged future-term enrollment as another important outcome — the number of enrolled students before the first day represents an early indicator of student commitment and facilitates timely intervention. "One month before the Spring 2022 semester started, 46% of my FTIC caseload had enrolled in classes," she recalled. "I started my Pathify Group later that year, in August 2022, so for the following Spring 2023 semester, I saw the number jump to 63%. For the Spring 2024 semester, 76% of my caseload has enrolled in classes a month out — that's huge when we consider forecasting and at-risk students!"

Deranian also recognized other institution-wide changes — like a revamped orientation and improved admissions and enrollment processes — in impacting these outcomes, but remained confident in Pathify's ability to reduce email fatigue and impact student engagement and readiness.

> **"The pandemic taught us that we're only as strong as the technologies we use. That's why it's important to think about how we talk with one other and how we build community.**
>
> **- Leah Deranian**

Photo Credit: St. Petersburg College

Creating Collaboration & Community

What began as a pilot replacing email communication quickly became widespread adoption and innovation. Out of the 60 total advisors at St. Petersburg College, half actively communicate and engage with their cohorts using Pathify Groups. Recognizing the need for internal collaboration, Deranian is already thinking a step ahead. "On my roadmap is creating an advisors-only Group," she said, highlighting the ability to share ideas and content. "We all use our Groups a little differently and we don't need to reinvent the wheel," she laughed. "It's also a great team-building opportunity."

Tomorrow's Toolkit

SPC's Pathify journey remains far from over. Next on the roadmap includes tinkering with Pathify's GenAI chatbot and configuring a student appointment and queuing tool using Flow, with a goal of further enhancing the student experience and streamlining advising processes. Above all, Deranian is optimistic about Pathify's current and future impact. "The pandemic taught us that we're only as strong as the technologies we use. That's why it's important to think about how we talk with one other and how we build community," she reflected.

With creativity, innovation and a constant drive for student success, St. Petersburg College creates an environment where students feel connected, comfortable and supported. Deranian's trailblazing approach fits right in. With Pathify Groups, her students' experiences become even more dynamic — providing them with the community and resources they need for success.

Leah Deranian
Instructional Technology Specialist
St. Petersburg College

About St. Petersburg College

Founded in 1927 as Florida's first two-year college, St. Petersburg College (SPC) is nationally recognized for its regional accreditation. A pioneer in offering bachelor's degrees, SPC provides over 200 programs, developed in collaboration with industry experts for career-focused education. The college's mission is to empower success and economic mobility through academic excellence and engagement, making access, excellence and robust student support its guiding principles. Learn more at spcollege.edu.

St. Petersburg College
SPC

LOOKING AHEAD
PATHIFY'S PRODUCT ROADMAP

With features like our GenAI Chatbot, refined integrations, an upgraded digital community and streamlined Flow UI/UX enhancements, we're serious about turning customer feedback into the tools our customers need to stay ahead. Here's what's on the horizon...

Photo Credit: Unsplash

1. GenAI Chatbot

As your friendly, tireless, always-available frontline, take campus support to the next level with Pathify's Chatbot, the ultimate powerhouse addition to your tech stack. Our bot delivers lightning-fast, accurate responses by harnessing the vast network of integrations across the Engagement Hub — offering ultra-personalized experiences for every user.

Unlike standalone chatbots, Chatbot integrates effortlessly with your tech stack *and* Pathify's Engagement Hub, providing a cost-effective, cohesive solution for lean teams and tight budgets.

Version 1 of Chatbot launches in early 2025. Learn more at pathify.com/lp/genai-chatbot/.

FEATURE SNAPSHOT

- *Platform Parity* - Just as the Engagement Hub displays information in Widgets, Chatbot matches this functionality when delivering information to users.

- *Verified Responses* - Chatbot surfaces sourced, verified and open responses, ensuring accuracy and reliability.

- *Provider Power* - Connect seamlessly with external systems — like the SIS and LMS — to display balances, grades, schedules and more.

- *Hyper-personalization* - Deliver unmatched personalization by integrating authentication with user roles, tailoring every interaction to individual needs.
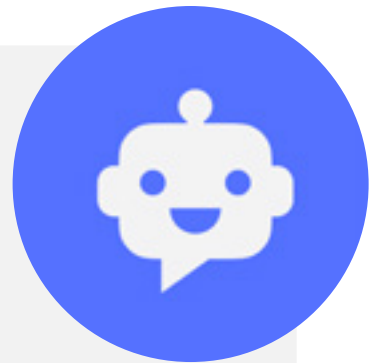
2. Recipes & Integrations

Calling all customer champions! We're busy crafting the next generation of recipes (not the culinary kind — check out page 35 to whip up some recipes in the kitchen!) that power your Pathify instance. Our system integrations give us a robust foundation in building out recipes for our recipe library, allowing customers to easily and seamlessly plug their systems into Pathify.

UPCOMING INTEGRATIONS

Jenzabar One

Salesforce

Nelnet

JIRA

Curious about what else is on the horizon?
Contact our team (product@pathify.com) to help grow this list!

3. Collegium Refresh

Inspired by the ancient Roman concept of a collegium, a group with shared goals and values, Collegium is also a digital space where Pathify customers come together for inspiration, sharing and engagement. Explore best practices, new use cases and stay connected with Pathify teams like Account Management, Support, Product and Marketing.

Collegium is more than a digital community, it's the best version of Pathify!

HERE'S WHAT'S NEW…

- **Customer Groups** - Groups are organized geographically and by Pathify team (i.e. Product, Flow) for more effective alignment and engagement.

- **Customer Certifications** - Using Forms, we incorporate Pathify certifications directly into Collegium for easy access and completion!

- **Customer Widgets** - Custom, customer-specific widgets show off the best, most creative ways to use the Pathify platform.

  The refreshed Collegium platform will launch in late 2024. Want to see the changes and get involved? Visit collegium.pathify.com!

4. Flow UI/UX Updates

With Flow, Pathify's proprietary middleware, "out of the box" solutions are just the beginning. Flow's deep software customizations enable institutions to infuse their unique identities into the platform, transforming interactions between students, staff and technology.

Our upcoming User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) updates will enhance customization, making your Engagement Hub even more personalized and driving higher adoption rates. With these updates, it's easier than ever to integrate your existing systems into Pathify, creating a seamless and personalized digital campus experience.

NEED SOME INSPIRATION? HERE'S HOW PATHIFY CUSTOMERS ARE CURRENTLY USING FLOW:

- *Displaying camera feeds to campus places such as coffee shop lines, IT help desks, parking lots or showing weather conditions*
- *Student radio stations*
- *Athletic scores*
- *Bus or shuttle systems and maps*
- *Employee paid time off*
- *School newspaper feed*

  The Flow UX/UI updates will release in late 2024.

HIGH STANDARDS, CORE VALUES
AND A TOUCH OF GOOFY

At Pathify, we don't just raise the bar — we launch it into the stratosphere. From the beginning, we've upheld a rigorous standard for success, as evidenced by an impressive 67 Net Promoter Score.

For us, customer delight isn't a goal — it's a requirement, and our business partners must share the same philosophy. This standard remains non-negotiable, setting us apart as a leader in higher ed tech.

EVERY GOOD PARTNERSHIP STARTS WITH LOBSTER (SANDALS)

Vision-Driven, Values-Centered

Choosing the right partners involves both art and science, demanding keen understanding of our core values and meticulously evaluating business and cultural outcomes. We seek companies, associations and consortia who embody similar values — Impact, Wit, Contrast, Technique and Care.

Impact means doing work that moves the needle, consistently driving toward positive solutions. Wit keeps us inventive and curious, always seeking optimism and inspiration. We value Contrast by embracing diversity in people and ideas, fostering a community-oriented environment built on feedback. Our commitment to Technique ensures we work smart, maintaining clarity and human touch across all interactions. Finally, our focus on Care reflects our thoughtful and considerate approach to each other, our customers and our partners.

Partnering for Impact

Our values drive successful, transformative collaborations, turning business relationships into partnerships that thrive on mutual respect. We've had the pleasure of deepening our partnership with The HESS (Higher Education Systems and Services) Consortium this year — Keith Fowlkes, Executive Director and Cofounder, recently commented on our dynamic:

"The HESS Consortium and the Coalition for College Cost Savings are very excited to have Pathify as a close business partner. Pathify fills a need among our national private, non-profit college and university members — institutions don't realize how important this type of community-based software is until they experience it. Partnering with Pathify elevates institutions' engagement and communication with their campus communities while driving student satisfaction and retention."

Our partners earn the trust of their members by consistently delivering exceptional value. Through our collaboration with this growing network, we strengthen our commitment to offering top-notch service and support.

Where High Standards Meet High Spirits

Pathify occupies a unique position within the industry, binding together higher ed's historically complicated and disconnected technologies into a unified digital experience. Being vendor agnostic drives our flexibility and freedom to partner with a diverse range of solutions, including independent associations and consortia, education communities, SIS integration partners, or even student payment or library softwares. This approach allows us to recommend — and integrate with — the best solutions, free from limitations like exclusive vendor relationships or larger private equity ecosystems. It keeps us adaptable and nimble, ensuring we can pivot quickly to incorporate the latest advancements in ed tech.

Being vendor agnostic also gives us flexibility in non-technical partnerships, ensuring we address institutions' diverse needs and create a supportive, engaging environment for all stakeholders. We take our reputation as the "life of the party" (we're quoting Keith Fowlkes from HESS again) seriously — because we believe connecting through laughter, good humor and collaboration builds stronger, more resilient relationships. This blend of fun and flexibility sets us apart (I suppose the Hawaiian shirts, beef jerky bouquets and lobster sandals do, too), ensuring our partnerships are both productive, valuable and enjoyable — no matter the landscape. If you've ever met us at an event, you know what I'm talking about — and if you haven't yet, check out page 7!

Setting the Standard, Bringing the Fun

Our commitment is clear: we will continue partnering with best-in-class companies and associations, maintaining and raising our standards. We aim to be trusted voices in the higher ed tech community, guiding our customers to top solutions and collaborating with those who share our dedication to excellence.

We're here to make an impact, to innovate and to inspire. And we do it all with a smile (and some stuffed kangaroos and bucket hats in tow), knowing that the journey is just as important as the destination. To our customers: we promise top-tier recommendations and unwavering support. To our potential partners: know our standards are high, but the rewards are immense. So, here's to thinking a bit differently, having fun and achieving excellence together — join us in setting the new standard for what's possible.

"We believe connecting through laughter, good humor and collaboration builds stronger, more resilient relationships.

— Loui Atchison

Loui Atchison
Field Marketing Lead
Pathify

A mountain-loving Denver local, Loui brings a unique blend of expertise to the Pathify team. With a professional journey including business consulting, management, sales and even touring as a musical theater performer, Loui channels her experience into building and fortifying Pathify partnerships. As Field Marketing Lead, she spearheads Pathify's event presence, representing the company virtually and on the road, and is passionate about finding the next great batch of Pathify customers.

55

BRAIN GAMES

GREAT MINDS THINK OTHERWISE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE
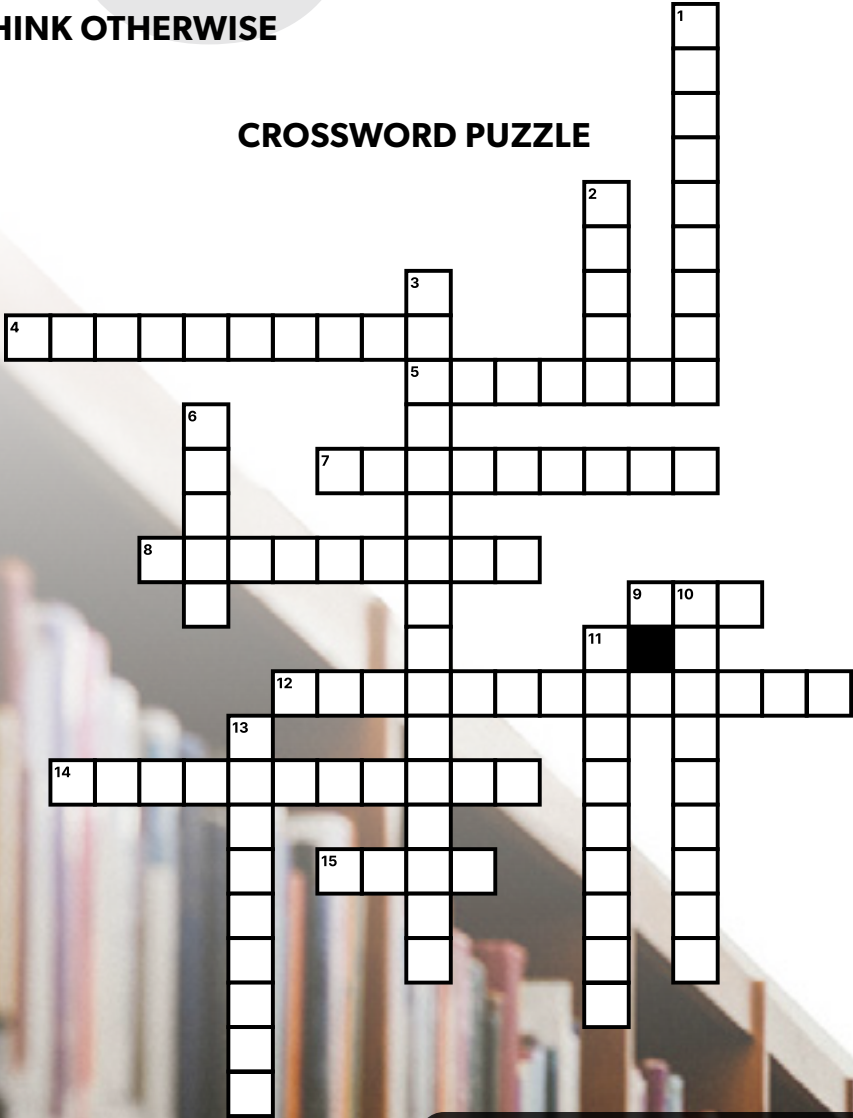
Scan this for answer key

Down:

1. 1999 sci-fi film starring Keanu Reeves
2. Not a short story
3. Known for his kite and key
6. Animated princess who ventures beyond the reef
10. 1913 assembly line creator
11. What legends dare to be
13. Glows with ideation

Across:

4. 1970s musician who famously blended various genres, from rock to electronic
5. Blockbuster's disruptive successor
7. Often challenged by greats
8. The first full-length animated feature film
9. Moment of sudden realization
12. 1860s art form that challenged traditional conventions
14. Cultural movement covering the 15th and 16th centuries
15. Ctrl+B on a PC

WORD MATCH

G'day mate! Test your vocabulary by matching the Aussie words or phrases to their modern English equivalents.

Aussie Phrase	Modern English Equivalent
Have a Captain Cook	This is provided for you to eat.
Yeah nah	Yes
Hit the frog and toad	A foolish person
Drongo	To leave or depart
Nah yeah	No
Wrap your laughing gear 'round that	An exclamation of surprise
Apples	A banana
No wuckas	A brief glance or inspection
Nah nah	It was not a great concern for me to perform this task; no problem
Strewth	I was happy to help, the work is complete.

SUDOKU

		6			4	9	8	1
9	5	1		7	6	3	4	
	2						7	
	6	5		2	7		9	3
1	9	3	5		8	7		
	4			1	3		6	8
	1		6			2		
6	3			4	2		5	7
		2			9		1	6

Each row, column and square must contain the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

THE FINAL
WORD

Written by: Matt Hammond

When given this little soapbox, it's tempting to reflect on 2024 and highlight all the Pathify superlatives. So tempting, I can't resist calling out a few things:

- We made our first company acquisition, welcoming Navengage's outstanding student engagement app (and a group of seriously talented people) into the mix.
- Despite increasing our customer base by over 30%, we maintained a 67 customer Net Promoter Score.
- For the second consecutive year, Pathify placed strongly on the Inc. 5000 fastest growing companies in the US list, placing first amongst ed-tech SaaS companies.
- We made incredible security strides, achieving SOC 2 Type I certification while continuing to provide best-in-class customer SLAs.
- For the fifth straight year, we're on target for our overall expense budget and annual revenue target.
- We added a Forms capability to our core portal at *no additional cost*.
- We released our Delegate Hub (parent or family portal) and a GenAI chatbot — capabilities completely unique to traditional student portals.
- We overhauled the digital version of *Collegium* (our online media house and user group environment), to prepare for moving all customer success resources and activity there in 2025.
- We've been everywhere, and I mean it...on customer campuses, at conferences, hosting happy hours... we've been everywhere.

I could easily fill another two pages detailing all the great things we've accomplished (I really could). But I realize that would completely contradict the central theme of this magazine:

"Great minds think otherwise."

Isn't that one of the coolest thing you've read in a while? Four simple words, that — when combined — could be as esoteric and profound as the universe, or as simple and salient as the golden rule. They come straight from the brilliant mind of Nick Beaulieu — Pathify's Design Lead, resident New Hampshirite and, incidentally, one of the other great things to happen to our company in 2024 (Nick started in January).

Nick's far more than a designer — he's a seasoned brand conductor and creative director who continuously pushes Pathify further into its unique category as an ed-tech brand. If our platform defines a new digital experience vertical, well, we better ensure our branding keeps pace. So when Nick said, "Innovators don't have to be pretentious. We might not always be right but we're helping students and schools — and we're doing it differently," you better believe I listen.

And abracadabra! A core theme is born, not just for this magazine — but for our entire business.

One of the best examples of this philosophy in practice is how we empower customers. With investment capital becoming harder to secure and overall budgets remaining fixed (or shrinking), most businesses view their customer success teams as *cost centers*, looking to cut in any way possible. Pathify considers its customer success team a *profit center*, with something like 150 schools willing to act as references. Pathify's customer success and support team will grow faster than any other part of the business in 2025, and we'll continue offering full implementation and ongoing support to our customers *for free*.

Pathify also leans heavily into the two new product modules released at the end of 2024. With Delegate Hub, the calculus is simple (and if you know anything about us — proven). Running one portal for students and one for their parents makes no sense. And please, don't get me started on sharing usernames and passwords... that strategy lacks viability — and poses a palpable risk. Delegates play a critical role in deciding where students go to school and supporting their students in school. If recruiting remains a priority — you need this.

We're confident Pathify's chatbot delivers several key differentiators, transforming the game in an already crowded playing field. We remain system agnostic, integrating across the tech stack more effectively than any company in higher ed — enabling a greater breadth and depth of responses. Implementation is low-impact, with most schools fully launched within weeks. We leverage Google's Gemini LLM, which reduces instances of getting stumped and hallucinations. Plus, our chatbot will almost certainly cost less than existing legacy competitors, who undeniably carry significant tech debt and overhead.

These two new products underline perhaps the most important focus for Pathify and our customers heading into 2025 — system consolidation to decrease overall technology spend. In the coming months, Pathify is releasing a ton of content illustrating how a large segment of customers see overall cost savings by investing in Pathify and sunsetting two...three...eight legacy systems. Nearly every school I've spoken with this year shared overall budget pressure and concerns in their top three worries for the future. We help you do more...not *with less*, but certainly *for less*.

Oh, and we're also building an enterprise Journey Mapping capability into our platform designed to impact recruiting, retention and overall student (and employee) success.

Now that's thinking otherwise.

In case you haven't noticed, I talk a lot about theming — I believe it's essential to help people understand how we approach both business and partnership. Just as importantly, I want the higher ed world to see who we are as individuals — how we perceive and navigate the complexities of this vital, challenging space called higher education.

"Challenge the status quo." "An orange in a sea of apples." "Those who know why will always lead those who know how." And now, "Great minds think otherwise." These words spell out how Pathify operates as a business — and as individuals.
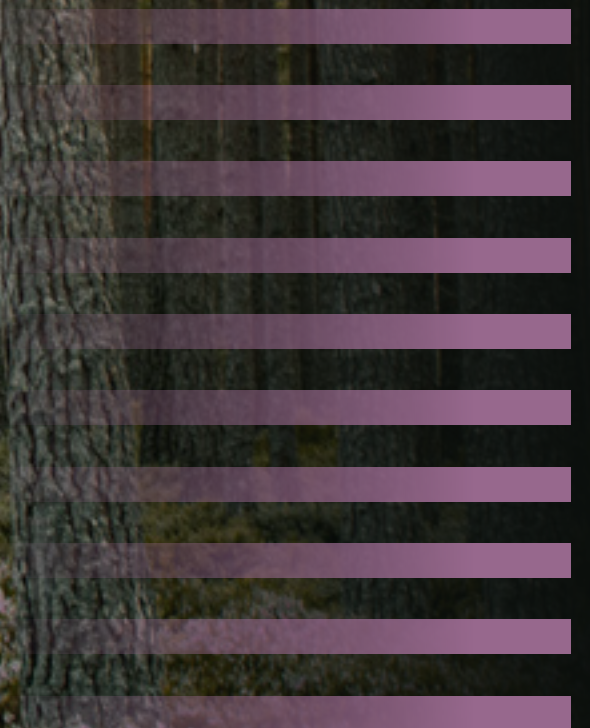
So what sage, inspiring, goofy, profound words come next? Flip to the beginning of the magazine to the Editor's Letter (Hannah took over as editor midway through '24 — another highlight of the year). Look how she signs off:

With curiosity and boldness.

I like the sound of that. Game on.

"**We help you do more...not *with less*, but certainly *for less*.**

– Matt Hammond

GREAT MINDS
THINK OTHERWISE

**SCAN FOR THE
DIGITAL VERSION**

Front Cover: Point Loma Nazarene University San Diego, California
(Proud Pathify customer since 2023)

Back Cover: Unsplash